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Damage and Destruction to US Aircraft During the Tet Offensive

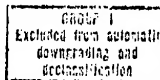
1. Reports from US elements throughout Vietnam concerning VC/NVA attacks during the Tet offensive (30 Jan - 11 Feb 1968) make it clear that US airfields were priority targets. A total of 1,295 US aircraft were hit; aircraft damage alone is estimated at \$350 million. On 30 and 31 January, 122mm rocket fire destroyed or damaged 73 aircraft at the Da Nang and nearby Marble Mountain Air Facilities. Mortar and rocket attacks against Bien Hoa Air Base destroyed or damaged 38 aircraft on 31 January and 10 February. Twenty-one helicopters were lost during the 11 February 82mm mortar attack on Camp Evans in Thua Thien.

2. The tabulation below shows the total number of US aircraft damaged and destroyed from 29 January through 11 February. A total of 97 aircraft were destroyed and 1,198 damaged; an average of 30 aircraft were destroyed every two weeks during 1967.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Major Damage</u>	<u>Minor Damage</u>	<u>Total</u>
Attack/Fighter	16	93	38	147
Other Fixed Wing	22	158	50	230
Helicopters	59	308	551	918
Total	97	559	639	1,295

These 1,295 aircraft represent approximately one-quarter of the 4,783 US

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aircraft deployed in South Vietnam.\* A degradation of US air attack and combat support capabilities is the inevitable result of these losses. This degradation is particularly severe in the case of helicopters; 30 percent of total US deployments were damaged or destroyed.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Deployed to South Vietnam</u>	<u>Damaged or Destroyed</u>	<u>Share Lost, Percent</u>
Attack/Fighter	563	147	26
Other Fixed Wing	1,130	230	20
Helicopters	3,090	918	30
Total	4,783	1,295	27

3. We estimate the total value of damage and destruction to US aircraft during the Tet offensive at \$350 million. Approximately \$70 million worth of aircraft were destroyed; major damage amounted to \$170 million and minor damage to \$110 million. This estimate has been prepared by costing aircraft listed as destroyed at their full flyaway cost. Those listed as sustaining major damage were costed at 70 percent of their flyaway cost; minor damage was costed at 20 percent. Although these selections of shares of flyaway costs are admittedly somewhat arbitrary, we believe they yield a reasonable approximation of the value of damage and destruction to US aircraft.

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\*Table 125, Southeast Asia Statistical Summary, 7 February 1968, p. 1-3. In a 13 Feb. 68 memo to the Chairman, JCS, the NMCC compared losses to aircraft assigned to all of Southeast Asia -- including carriers, Thailand, Guam, Taiwan, and Okinawa. A total of 996 aircraft are deployed in these other areas.

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